

Message Text

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M:LEAGLEBURGER (SUBSTANCE)

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292195 TOSEC 310347

FOR FUNSETH FROM BROWN (S/PRS)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A)

SUBJECT: DAILY PRESS BRIEFING: CARTER-CRONKITE INTERVIEW

1. SUBJECT OF SECRETARY'S FUTURE CAME UP AGAIN AT NOON DAILY BRIEFING, NOVEMBER 30, THIS TIME IN CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER INTERVIEW WITH WALTER CRONKITE. DEPUTY SPOKESMAN REPLIED THAT QUESTIONS ARISING FROM INTERVIEW HAVE NOT BEEN PUT TO SECRETARY AND THAT WE HAD NOTHING TO OFFER BY WAY OF COMMENT. ANSWER WAS ACCEPTED FOR TIME BEING BUT DEPUTY SPOKESMAN FINALLY AGREED TO TAKE QUESTION "WOULD SECRETARY BE AVAILABLE FOR SORT OF ROLE THAT CARTER AND CRONKITE TOUCHED ON YESTERDAY?"

2. TEXT OF RELEVANT PARTS OF CARTER-CRONKITE INTERVIEW FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: CRONKITE: WHAT ABOUT SUGGESTIONS FROM CONGRESSMEN OF HIS OWN PARTY THAT KISSINGER BE KEPT ON AS CONFIDENTIAL

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AN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATOR FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION?

CARTER: WELL THAT'S A POSSIBILITY. I THINK IT IS NOT PROPER AT THIS TIME TO SAY YES, OR NO. I THINK THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IS A SUPERB NEGOTIATOR, AND IF THERE WAS A TIME IN THE FUTURE--IF THERE IS A TIME WHEN I

THOUGHT THAT HIS SERVICES WOULD BE THE BEST ONES AVAILABLE IN A NEGOTIATION CONCERNING AFRICA OR THE MID EAST, OR PANAMA, OR WHATEVER--I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CALL ON HIM TO HELP ME.

HE WOULD BE ON AD HOC BASIS--FOR THE ONE MAJOR PROJECT INVOLVED AT THE TIME--BUT FOR HIM TO PLAY A CONTINUING ROLE IN MY ADMINISTRATION, WOULD BE HIGHLY UNLIKELY.

CRONKITE: DID HE OFFER HIS SERVICES AS A SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR FOR --

CARTER: WE DIDN'T GET THAT SPECIFIC. HE SPENT FIVE OR SIX HOURS DOWN HERE IN PLAINS WITH ME, A COUPLE OF SATURDAYS AGO, AND AS HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH, I THINK ALL THE PRESENT CABINET OFFICERS--I HAVE SAID, "I AM GOING TO COUNT ON YOU TO HELP ME WHEN I BECOME PRESIDENT, I NEED YOUR ADVICE AND COUNSEL." AND I THINK THAT WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THEY HAVE ALL SAID, "WE ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU WHENEVER YOU CALL ON US, MR. PRESIDENT."

3. SINCE GUIDANCE PREPARED PREVIOUSLY TO HANDLE NYTIMES AND OTHER PRESS SPECULATION MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT-ELECT'S COMMENTS, WE OFFER THREE OPTIONS FOR ANSWERTO QUESTION TAKEN AT TODAY'S BRIEFING:

OPTION 1: THE SECRETARY APPRECIATES THE KIND WORDS OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER. AS HE HAS STATED MANY TIMES, HE BELIEVES THAT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IS ESSENTIALLY BIPARTISAN. HE IS OBVIOUSLY PREPARED TO PROVIDE OCCASIONAL ADVICE TO THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION IN THE SPIRIT OF THAT BIPARTISANSHIP AND IN THE TRADITION OF OTHER FORMER SECRETARIES OF STATE. LIKE OTHER SECRETARIES, HOWEVER, HE DOES CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO ASSUME AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ANY FUTURE ADMINISTRATION.

OPTION 2: THE SECRETARY OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATES THE KIND WORDS OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER BUT BELIEVES IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO OFFER FURTHER COMMENT REGARDING THE CONTENTS OF THIS INTERVIEW.

OPTION 3: WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE SECRETARY'S PARTY
AND HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID ON
THIS SUBJECT FOR THE RECORD.

4. EAGLEBURGER HAS SEEN THIS CABLE AND STRONGLY PREFERS
OPTION NUMBER THREE, REPEAT THREE.

5. PLEASE ADVISE. ROBINSON

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